

Lesson Unit 11: Buddhist Path

Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Explain the middle path of the Buddha
- Explain the triad: morality, meditation and wisdom and the eight factors of the noble path.
- Explain the right concentration and its interdependency on other seven factors of the path
- Explain both Insight and Serenity Meditations based on the canonical sources
- Explain the importance given to satipaṭṭhāna practice in Theravada Meditation
- Explain role of jhāna in the Theravada path

Student Activities:

- Read each of the Readings/notes carefully and underline/ highlight the key words and concepts in each reading.
- Draw a mind-map around the main topic linking the key words and concepts that you underlined or highlighted in the readings showing their relationship to the main topic and also to each other
- Read the quoted passages and be familiar with the textual explanations on different aspects and levels of Buddhist Path
- For your journal entries, write detailed accounts on the following: meditation, middle path, noble eightfold path, samatha, vipassanā, jhāna, satipaṭṭhāna

1. Reading
<p>The Noble Eightfold Path -By Bhikkhu Bodhi</p> <p>Dukkha, its origin, its cessation, and the way to its cessation-these are the Four Noble Truths, the "elephant's footprint" that contains within itself all the essential teachings of the Buddha. It might be risky to say that any one truth is more important than the others. since they all hang together in a very close integral unit. But if we were to single out one truth as the key to the whole Dhamma it would be the Fourth Noble Truths, the truth of the way, the way to the end of Dukkha. That is the Noble Eightfold Path, the path made up of the following eight factors divided into three</p>

larger groups;

Wisdom

1. [right view](#)
2. [right intention](#)

moral discipline

3. [right speech](#)
4. [right action](#)
5. [right livelihood](#)

concentration

6. [right effort](#)
7. [right mindfulness](#)
8. [right concentration](#)

We say that the path is the most important element in the Buddha's teaching because the path is what makes the Dhamma available to us as a living experience. Without the path the Dhamma would just be a shell, collection of doctrines without inner life. Without the path full deliverance from suffering would become a mere dream.

RIGHT VIEW (Samma Ditti)

Right view is placed first because right view is the eye that guides and directs all the other factors. In the practice of the path, we need the vision and understanding supplied by right views, in order to see the way to travel along the path. Then we need the other factors, conduct or practice, in order to bring us to our destination.

Right view is placed at the beginning of the path to show that before we can set foot on the actual practice, we need the understanding provided by right view, as our guide, our inner director, to show us where we are starting from, where we are heading, and what are the successive stages to be passed through in practice.

Usually the Buddha defines right view as the understanding of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the origin, its cessation and the way to its cessation. To follow the path right from the start we need a correct perspective on the human condition. We have to see that our lives are not fully satisfactory, that life is impermanent, that it is subject to suffering, and we have to understand that suffering is something that we have to penetrate by means of knowledge, something that we have to conquer, and not something we should escape from by pain removers, entertainment, distractions or dull forgetfulness.

At the deepest level we have to see that all things that make up our being, the five aggregates, are impermanent, constantly changing, and therefore cannot be held to as a basis for security or unchanging happiness. Then we have to see that the cause of Dukkha lies in our own mind. Nobody is imposing it on us. We cannot put the blame outside ourselves. It is through our own craving and clinging that we produce suffering and pain for ourselves. Then when we see that the cause of the Dukkha lies in our own mind, we understand that the key to liberation too lies in our

own mind. That key is the overcoming of ignorance and craving by means of wisdom. Then, to enter the path, we need the confidence that by following the Noble Eightfold Path we can reach the goal, the cessation of suffering.

The Buddha defines right view as the understanding of the Four Noble Truths for a very important reason, namely, that he does not want his disciples to practice his teaching merely out of feelings of devotion. Rather, he wants them to follow the path on the basis of their own understanding. Their own insight into the nature of human life.

As we'll see later, the path begins with an elementary level of right understanding. As the mind develops in the course of practice, the understanding will gradually deepen, expand and widen, and as it does so we come back again and again to right view.

RIGHT INTENTION (Samma Sankappa)

The second factor of the path is right intention. "Sankappa" means purpose, intention, resolve, aspiration, motivation. This factor of right intention follows as the natural consequence of right view. Through right view, we gain an understanding of the real nature of existence, and this understanding changes our motivation, our purposes in life, our intentions and inclinations. As a result, our minds become shaped by right intentions as opposed to wrong intentions.

In his analysis of this factor, the Buddha explains that there are three kinds of right intentions:

- a) The intention of renunciation
- b) The intention of non-aversion or loving kindness.
- c) The intention of non-injury or compassion.

These are opposed to the three wrong intentions, the intention of sensuality, the intention of aversion and intention of harmfulness or cruelty.

Right intention, as we said, follows naturally from right view. Whenever we gain right view, insight into the fact of Dukkha, then we become motivated to renounce our attachments, our clinging to pleasure, wealth, power and fame. We don't have to suppress the desire for them. The desire falls off naturally by itself. When we look at other beings through the lens of the Four Noble Truths, we see that others are also caught up in the net of suffering. This perception brings about a deep identification with others, a feeling of oneness with them, which leads to loving kindness and compassion. As these attitudes arise they motivate us to renounce aversion and hatred and all violence and cruelty.

This second factor counteracts the two unwholesome roots of actions, greed and aversion.

With the next three factors, we learn to translate right intention into action. These we get the three factors of right speech, right action, and right livelihood.

RIGHT SPEECH (Samma Vacha)

This contains four aspects.

- (a) Abstinence from false speech, that is, from lying - instead making an effort to speak truthfully.
- (b) Abstinence from slanderous speech, statements intended to divide or create enmity between people. Instead the follower of the path should always speak words which promote friendship and harmony between people.
- (c) Abstinence from harsh speech, from speech which is angry and bitter, which cuts into the hearts of others. Instead one's speech should always be soft, gentle and affectionate.
- (d) Abstinence from idle chatter, from gossip. Instead one should speak words which are

meaningful, significant and purposeful.

The above show the tremendous power locked up in the faculty of speech. The tongue may be a very small organ compared to the body. But this little organ can do immense good or immense harm depending on how it is used. Of course, what we really have to master is not the tongue but the mind which makes use of the tongue.

RIGHT ACTION (Samma Kammanta)

This factor is concerned with bodily action and has three aspects.

- (a) Abstinence from destruction of life, that is, abstaining from killing of other living beings, which includes animals and all other sentient beings, to abstain from hunting, fishing etc.
- (b) Abstinence from taking what is not given, that is, from stealing, cheating, exploiting others, gaining wealth by dishonest and illegal ways etc.
- (c) Abstinence from sexual misconduct, that is from illicit types of sexual relations such as adultery, seduction, rape, etc. and for those who are ordained as monks, the observance of celibacy.

Although the principles of right speech and right action are worded negatively, in terms of a little reflection it shows that positive psychological factors of great power go along with abstinence, for example;

- i Abstaining from the taking of life implies a commitment to compassion, respecting the life of other beings.
- ii Abstaining from stealing - a commitment to honesty or respect for others' rights of ownership.
- iii Abstaining from false speech - a commitment to truth.

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD (Samma Ajiva)

The Buddha teaches his disciples to avoid any occupation or job that causes harm and suffering to other living beings or any kind of work that leads to one's own inner deterioration. Instead the disciple should earn a living in an honest, harmless and peaceful way.

Buddha mentions five specific occupations that one should avoid:

- (a) Dealing in flesh, eg. as a butcher.
- (b) Dealing in poisons.
- (c) Dealing in weapons and arms.
- (d) Dealing in slave trade and prostitution.
- (e) Dealing in intoxicants or liquors and drugs.

The Buddha also says that his followers should avoid deceitfulness, hypocrisy, high pressure salesmanship, and trickery, or any kind of dishonest way of acquiring means of support.

These three factors which we have discussed-right speech, right action and right livelihood - deal with the outer conduct of life. The next three factors are concerned with the training of the mind.

RIGHT EFFORT (Samma Vayama)

The Buddha begins the training of the mind with right effort. He places a special stress on this factor because the practice of the path requires work, energy and exertion. The Buddha is not a savior: "The Enlightened Ones point out the path, you yourselves must make the effort". he says

further, "the goal" is for the energetic person not for the lazy one. Here we come to the great optimism of Buddhism, the optimism which refutes all charges of pessimism. The Buddha says through right effort we can transform the whole structure of our lives. We are not the hopeless victims of our past conditioning. We are not the victims of our genes or of our environment, but through mental training it is possible to raise the mind to the high plateau of wisdom, enlightenment and liberation.

Right effort can be broken down into four aspects. If we observe the states that arise in the mind, we see that they fall into two basic classes, wholesome states and unwholesome states. The unwholesome states are the states of mind rooted in the defilements, in greed, hatred and delusion, and in their offshoots. The wholesome side consists of the virtuous qualities that should be developed and cultivated, such as the eight factors of the path, the four foundations of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment, etc.

With regard to each of these wholesome and unwholesome states there are two tasks we have to perform. So the four aspects of right effort are as follows:

(a) The effort to prevent un arisen unwholesome states from arising

At a time when the mind is calm, something may happen which will spark off a defilement. eg. attachment to a pleasant object, aversion to an unpleasant object. By maintaining watchfulness over the senses, we are able to prevent the unarisen defilement from arising. We are able to simply take note of the object without reacting to the object by way of greed or aversion.

(b) The effort to abandon the arisen unwholesome states

That is to eliminate the defilements that have arisen. When we see that a defilement has arisen we have to apply energy to eliminate it. This can be done by a variety of methods.

(c) Develop the undeveloped wholesome states

We have many beautiful, potential qualities stored up in the mind. We have to bring these up to the surface of the mind, e.g. loving kindness, compassion etc.

(d) Strengthen and cultivate the existing wholesome states.

We must avoid falling into complacency and have to make effort to sustain the wholesome states and to develop them to full growth and completion.

A further word of caution has to be added about right effort. The mind is a very delicate instrument and its development requires a precise balancing of the different mental faculties. We need keen mindfulness to recognize what kind of mental state has arisen and a certain degree of wisdom to keep the mind in balance to prevent it from veering to extremes. This is the middle way.

Effort should be balanced without exhausting the mind on the one hand and without letting it fall into stagnation on the other. The Buddha says in order to get good music from a lute, its strings have to be tuned not too tight and not too loose.

Practicing the path must be done in the same way. The way to practicing is according to the Middle Way: balance energy and calm.

RIGHT MINDFULNESS (Samma Sati) - by Mithra Wettimuny

Living in right mindfulness is the bedrock of one's welfare and the foundation for one's mental development. It is a great blessing. It is one's greatest protection. Human beings generally have a certain level of mindfulness. However, it is somewhat diffused. Therefore, it cannot be rightfully termed right mindfulness. Right mindfulness is not acquired so easily; but then, good things never come easy. To develop and acquire right mindfulness requires great effort and commitment. It requires sacrifice.

Right mindfulness means keeping the mind in the present. This means that when one performs a certain task, one should be mindful and totally aware of that act at the time of performance. For example, when one brushes his/her teeth, he/she should be mindful of this process by paying attention to it and not allow any other thoughts to intrude. When you are eating, eat in silence, mindful of eating. But, if you are engaged in conversation whilst eating, that would be wrong mindfulness. From those two simple examples, you can realize that living in right mindfulness is not such an easy task. If one performs two or three acts simultaneously, it is not a skill but a weakness. Doing one thing at a time is the real skill, the real achievement.

One must resolve to develop right mindfulness. One must diligently train for it by practicing simple exercises and gradually progress. In particular, one must direct one's mindfulness to the internal. Most pay attention to the external, but rather you should look inward for your own welfare. This means:

- (a) being mindful of body.
- (b) being mindful of feeling.
- (c) being mindful of mental states.
- (d) being mindful of mental contents.

These are the four foundations of mindfulness. These are the four fields of resort of the one who lives in mindfulness.

When you keep developing this faculty diligently, it will be a great source of protection. When right mindfulness is developed and made much of, one realizes what one should do and should not do. Whether one should speak or not speak. When one speaks, what should be spoken and not spoken. Right mindfulness is the basis for the development of the right path that culminates in knowledge, wisdom, contentment and the highest happiness.

RIGHT CONCENTRATION (Samma Samadhi)

Right effort and right mindfulness are directed at the eighth factor of the path, right concentration. This is defined as wholesome one-pointedness of the mind, wholesome unification of the mind. To develop concentration we generally begin with a single object and attempt to fix the mind on this object so that it remains there without wavering. We use right effort to keep the mind focused on the object, right mindfulness to be aware of the hindrances to concentration, then we use effort to eliminate hindrances and strengthen the aids to concentration. With repeated practice the mind becomes gradually stilled and tranquil.

With further practice we can develop deep states of absorption, called the "JHANAS".
[See meditation on Serenity]

Stilled mind - The Gateway to wisdom

When the mind is stilled and collected it serves as the means to develop insight. Having developed right concentration, when the mind has become a powerful tool, we direct it to the four

foundations of mindfulness, contemplating the body, feeling, states of mind and mental objects.

Then as the mind examines the flow of events in the body mind process, as it tunes into the flow from moment to moment, gradually step by step there occurs the arising of insight. Insight develops, matures and deepens, and turns into wisdom, the liberating wisdom which sees into the Four Noble Truths.

At this peak of development, the seeing of the Four Noble Truths become direct and immediate and it brings the destruction of the defilements, the purification of the mind and liberation of the mind from the fetters.

As the name suggests, the Noble Eightfold Path consists of eight factors. The eight factors need not be followed in sequence. The path consists of eight factors working simultaneously. They all perform distinctive functions, all contributing in their unique way to attainment of the end of suffering.

2. Reading

Meditation in the Pali Canon and the Theravada Buddhism

The practice of meditation occupies an important place in the literature of the Theravada tradition. The definitive outline of Buddhist life, the Noble Eightfold Path, is divided into three parts: wisdom, ethics, and meditation (samādhi), the latter of which includes right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Thus Pali literature presents meditation as an integral and essential part of Buddhist life and a necessary condition for achieving nibbana. The treatments of meditation found in Pali literature reflect early Buddhist meditation as it was understood by monastics in Buddhist India and Sri Lanka, not only of the Theravada school but also the other schools of non-Mahayana Buddhism.

The Pali Canon contains some of the definitive formulations of basic meditation techniques that Buddhists in Theravada traditions continue to practice today. Perhaps one of the most important sutras on meditation is the Sutta on the Foundations of Mindfulness (MN I, 55). The concept of mindfulness (sati) is essential to all Buddhist meditation practice, denoting focused attention to whatever activity in which one is engaged. Meditation literature presents mindfulness both as a prerequisite and an essential aspect of virtually all forms of meditation, and an instrument of penetrating through false concepts to see things as they are.

The four foundations of mindfulness are presented as “contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful,” and likewise the feelings as feelings, the mind as mind, and the objects of mind as objects of mind. The implication is that in a non-mindful condition one does not see these things as they are. Within each of these four foundations are a number of specific objects of meditation.

Mindfulness of the body, for example, includes mindfulness of the breath, in which the practitioner observes the continuous flow of the breath in and out, noting the length of breaths and thereby bringing about the gradual calming of the body. Other meditations on the body include mindfulness of various physical postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying down), movements of the body, the bodily parts (earth, water, fire, air, and the corpse in various stages of decomposition (for evoking the truth of impermanence, the repugnance of the body, and the inevitability of death).

Mindfulness of feelings includes pleasant, painful, or neutral feelings. Mindfulness of mind itself includes the contemplation of the mind’s states when affected or unaffected by desire, hatred, and delusion, and in a state of focused contraction or distraction. Mindfulness of the objects of mind includes contemplation of the “five hindrances” to entering meditative states: sensual desire, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. Other objects of mind include the five aggregates, the six sense bases, the seven factors of awakening, and the four noble truths – all important elements of Buddhist doctrine to be considered in the meditative state. The practitioner is supposed to maintain a calm but alert focus on these various objects of mindfulness, noting them but not trying to suppress them. The implication is that seeing all of these “as they are” will lessen clinging to them, allow the mind to transcend its entanglement with destructive states, and facilitate more productive states that naturally to move the practitioner toward greater insight. The fruits of this meditation are said to be nothing less than the possibility of “final knowledge here and now.”

Other important elements of meditation in the Pali corpus are the Jhanas – highly refined states of focused awareness in which attention is completely absorbed in its object. The Jhanas are a succession of states, each more elevated than the last: (1) a state consisting of applied thought, discursive examination, happiness, joy, and one-pointed concentration; (2) the stilling of applied thought, while retaining discursive examination, happiness, joy, and one-pointed concentration; (3) the stilling of discursive examination while

retaining happiness and joy, and the arising of equanimity and mindfulness; (4) a state of mindfulness and equanimity transcending pleasure and pain, joy and grief (MN III, 92). Beyond these are even more refined states of concentration that transcend all physical elements, the four “formless absorptions” (arupajhana): awareness of endless space, unlimited consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception. Some of the various accounts of stages of meditation include one beyond the jhanas – the “cessation of perception and feeling,” a condition of deepest calm in which all cognitive processes are temporarily suspended. As elevated as these may appear, the jhanas are generally not considered ends in themselves and can even be sources of subtle attachment (MN I, 294ff., Visuddhimagga 18.16ff).

As elevated as such states appear, the Jhanas are not themselves sufficient to the attainment of awakening. They are deep states of calm and serenity attained through tranquility meditation (samatha). Such techniques foster a profoundly restful state and refined concentration (samādhi) but are often presented as subordinate or preliminary to insight meditation (vipassana), which comprises a wide variety of practices for seeing the various elements of existence as they truly are. Insight meditation aims at penetrating through the web of false conceptualizations (mannita, papanca) that cloud the mind in order to see the true nature of phenomena, particularly their impermanence (anicca), their lack of permanent and substantial selfhood (anatta), and the ways in which they cause suffering and dissatisfaction (dukkha). Having seen things in their true nature, the meditator no longer identifies with them or sees them as “me” or “mine,” that is, related to a false sense of selfhood. The culmination of such insight is identical to the Buddha’s own awakening, in which the practitioner recollects his or her own past lives and those of others, and comprehends the elimination of all āsavas, destructive states of being that bind one to saṃsāra (DN I, 74ff).

By far the most comprehensive source for meditation is Buddhaghosa’s fifth century CE Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), a voluminous commentary on virtually all aspects of meditation found in the Pali Canon. This is not only a manual of meditation but a commentary on many facets of the Dhamma, primarily as it applies to monastic life. It addresses many preliminaries to meditation, such as withdrawal from society and the development of a

strong moral basis, which is always a prerequisite for the serious practice of Buddhist meditation. One notable feature of the Visuddhimagga as it relates to meditation is its description and analysis of forty meditation subjects. They include thematic meditations such as recollections of the Buddha, his teachings, the community, and contemplations of various aspects of morality, elements of Buddhist doctrine, and the cultivation of beneficent attitudes toward others (brahmaviharas) – loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Also included are contemplations of the human corpse mentioned above. Buddhaghosa says that different people in diverse circumstances are suited to various types of these meditations, though the cultivation of friendliness and awareness of death are beneficial to all. He also analyses in detail the main elements of Buddhist doctrine, incorporating them finally into a complex map of the various conditions and stages of insight leading to enlightenment.

3. Notes

Meditation: Samatha and Vipassana

- Samatha and Vipassana are two major meditations (D III, 213)
- They are two dhammas to be cultivated: samatha and vipassana (D III, 273)
- The Buddha advised Vacchagotta who had already completed the preliminary training prescribed in Buddhism to undertake the further practice of the two meditations for such practice helps him realizing various elements such as the six-fold extra-sensory knowledge (M I 494). After the practice Vacchagotta attained last three of the six and became a Tevijja Arahant.
- The two meditations form the Path leading to the unconditioned (S IV, 360).
- Asankhata is nibbana; it is the state where lust, hate, and delusion are no more (S IV, 359). This means that the two meditations are aimed at freeing the mind from lust, hate and delusion.
- Somaratne's opinion: Lust (*raga*) and hate (*dosa*) (= emotional problem) = craving (*tanha*); delusion (*moha*) (= cognitive problem) = ignorance (*avijjā*).
- Serenity Meditation deals with training emotions or removing craving or lust and hate. The removal of craving would be temporary as long as ignorance is not removed.

- Insight Meditation deals with removing ignorance or delusion. Once ignorance is removed, it is going to be a permanent removal.
- Buddhist path is a gradual path. Depending on where the trainee is in that gradual path, further practices are recommended.
- Buddhist path is to be undertaken individually. Depending on the character and the current progress of the person, further practices are prescribed.
- Some begins the path with Serenity Meditation; Some with Insight Meditation. At the end for reaching Nibbana, one must have practiced Insight Meditation.
- To practice Insight Meditation in its true sense, a higher level of concentration is required. One may reach that concentration by practicing Serenity Meditation.
- By practicing Serenity Meditation, one comprehends one's physical body (= aggregate of form = *rūpa-kkhandha*); when one comprehends the physical body, s/he abandons craving; when craving is abandoned, due to the detachment from lust, s/he actualizes freedom of mind (Petakopadesa, 123-4)
- By practicing Insight Meditation, one comprehends one's mental body (=aggregates of feeling, perception, formations and consciousness = *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhara, viññāna*); when one comprehends one's mental body, s/he abandons ignorance; when ignorance is abandoned, due to the detachment from ignorance, s/he actualizes freedom through wisdom (Petakopadesa, 123-4)
- Serenity Meditation > purification of right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) > freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*)
- Insight Meditation > purification of right view (*sammāditthi*) > freedom through wisdom
- One breaks ignorance through the well-established [right] view, through the well-established path-practice (S V, 11)
- Final release consists of both *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*; hence the practicing of both Serenity and Insight are required.
- The mind of the one who has engaged in meditation-exercise becomes free from defilements, due to non-grasping (S III, 153-4)
- Meditation = the cultivation of 37 factors: four foundations of mindfulness; four exertions; four foundations of miracle powers; five faculties; five powers; seven factors of enlightenment; noble eightfold path
- Transformation of the negative craving to positive concentration; the negative ignorance to positive wisdom
- Higher level of concentration is required for complete eradication of ignorance; practice of both Serenity and Insight cause *arahantship*/ the attainment of *nibbana*
- One could practice Serenity and attain four *Jhāna*; then the fourth *Jhāna* could serve as a meditation object of Insight to contemplate on the impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self nature; Such practice of Insight could cause liberating insight
- Highest permanent *vimutti* = *nibbana* = final liberation = no ignorance = full of wisdom = complete freedom from defilements = the attained is no longer influenced by ignorance and craving; raga is totally and irrevocably eradicated only through wisdom

- Other temporary types and levels of *vimutti* = *cittassa vimutti* or *cetovimutti* = the detachment of *citta* from craving to a certain degree = a requirement for the arising of wisdom; detachment of mind from craving brings concentration
- One with concentration comprehends as they really have been; some degree of concentration is essential for the attainment of final liberation
- Inter-connection between ignorance and craving makes *nibbana* a goal difficult to be attained
- Serenity and Insight are to curb craving and ignorance respectively
- Serenity = *Samatha* = *Samadhi* = temporary tranquil state = detaching *citta* from craving = foundation for insight to uproot ignorance
- To resolve craving-ignorance complex, Serenity-insight (in conjunction) is to be used
- Without Insight Meditation, without gaining wisdom, permanent freedoms could not be attained
- The methodological multiplicity brings different kinds of temporary and permanent freedoms
- By practicing Serenity, *cetovimuttis* (= *jhanas*, *samapattis*, *brahmaviharas*) are attained.
- By practicing Insight, *paññavimutti/s* are attained. The highest *paññavimutti* is arhantship; That *arahant* is called *paññavimutta*
- *Ubbatobhagavimutta* is an *arahant* who has practiced both Serenity and Insight to the highest level and can attain eight deliverances (*atthavimokha*)
- All *arahants* are the same when considered their attainment of liberation from the cycle of existence is concerned. They have achieved *khaye ñana* and *anupade ñana* (D III, 214) (G.A. Somaratne)

4. Notes

Satipatthana

The mental qualities required for the direct path of satipatthana:

- (1) a balanced and sustained application of effort (*atapi*)
- (2) the presence of clearly knowing (*sampajana*)
- (3) a balanced state of mind free from desires (*abhiijha*) and discontent (*domanassa*)

The three qualities revolve around the central mental quality of sati.

Sati represents the deliberate cultivation and a qualitative improvement of the receptive awareness that characterizes the initial stages of the perceptual process. Important aspects of sati are bare and equanimous receptivity, combined with an alert, broad, and open state of mind.

One of the central tasks of sati is the de-automatization of habitual reactions and perceptual evaluations. Sati thereby leads to a progressive restructuring of perceptual appraisal, and culminates in an undistorted vision of reality "as it is."

The element of non-reactive watchful receptivity in sati forms the foundation for satipatthana as an ingenious middle path which neither suppresses the contents of experience nor compulsively reacts to them.

This mental quality of sati has a broad variety of possible applications. Sati can range from the coarsest activities, such as defecation and urination, all the way up to the most sublime and exalted state, when sati is present as a mental factor during the breakthrough to nibbana.

A similar breadth of application can be found in the context of calmness meditation, where the tasks of sati range from recognizing the presence of a hindrance, to emerging with awareness from the higher meditative absorption.

The main thrust of satipatthana can be summed up as: Keep Calmly Knowing Change.

The Buddha recommended the practice of satipatthana to newcomers and beginners, and also included advanced practitioners and arahants among the cultivators of satipatthana.

For the beginner the discourses stipulate a basis in ethical conduct and the presence of straight view as necessary foundations.

The practice of satipatthana leads to overcoming weakness with regard to the five

precepts (A IV, 457).

The ethical foundation required to begin satipatthana might be weak at the outset, but will be strengthened as practice proceeds.

Additional requisites for undertaking the practice:

To limit one's activities, to refrain from gossiping, excessive sleep, and socializing, and to develop sense restraint and moderation with regard to food (A III 450).

Why would one who has realized the goal continue with satipatthana?

Arahants continue with insight meditation because for them this is simply the most appropriate and pleasant way to spend their time (S III, 168).

Proficiency in satipatthana, together with delight in seclusion, are indeed distinguishing qualities of an arahant. (S V, 175; S V, 302; D II, 283; A IV, 224; A V, 175).

Once true detachment has set in, the continuity of insight meditation becomes a source of delight and satisfaction.

Satipatthana is not only the direct path leading to the goal, but also the perfect expression of having realized the goal. Path and Nibbana merge into one, like one river merging with another (D II 223)

Jhānas

- *Jhanas* function as both techniques and attainments in the Buddhist spiritual path. As techniques they are treated under Serenity Meditation, and as attainments, under Concentration-Freedom (*cetovimutti*). However, they are not treated early Buddhism as a necessary condition for the attainment of *Nibbana*. But, it is said that to attain any form of freedom a developed state of concentration, whether jhānic or not, is required. Some practitioners utilize the jhānic level of concentration for the attainment of *Nibbana*. Others just use concentration for this.
- The term *jhana* stands for a high degree of tranquility. The arising of *jhana* indicates that the practitioner is free to a certain degree from sense-impressions and other forms of defilements for a temporary period of time.
- Jhanas comprise various types and contents. Two basic *Jhana* types are: form (*rupa*) and formless (*arupa*) have been identified. Form *jhanas* indicate that the meditator has transcended the sensual realm (*kama*), and that she is in the form realm here and now. Formless *jhanas* indicate that the meditator has transcended the form realm too, and that she experiences a formless realm here and now.
- There are four form *jhanas* and four formless *jhanas*. Each of the eight consists of specific *jhana* factors as their contents.
- As AN II, 80 has it, it is not advisable to think over the meditator's unthinkable jhana realm for it just brings confusion and mental unease to the thinker. However, its actualization brings temporary mental and physical ease and comfort.
- To attain the *jhanas*, one must cultivate right conditions. As a result, *jhanas* were accessible only to a minority of disciples.

- Serenity Meditation only produces temporary types of freedom (*samaya-vimutti*); and forms a foundation for the cultivation of Insight Meditation. It is insight that conditions permanent freedoms (*asamaya-vimutti*): freedom of the stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner and *arahant*.
- Serenity Meditator, while concentrating on the meditation subject, tranquilizes the five hindrances temporarily. As her Serenity Meditation progresses, it enables her to attain the four form (*rupa*) *jhanas* in the sequential order. Then passing through the material realm, she concentrates on immaterial subjects and attains successfully the four formless (*arupa*) *jhanas* or attainments (*arupa-samapatti*).
- These *jhana* practices enable one to concentrate on one subject for a longer period of time. In Insight Meditation, one contemplates on things as they are; therefore, to observe and realize the impermanent and unsubstantial nature of oneself and of the world, Insight Meditation requires lasting concentration.
- These *jhana* states also provide the meditator with the opportunity to understand even these peaceful comfortable *jhana* states – that transcend the sensual realm with the attainment of form *jhanas*, the formless realm with the attainment of formless *jhanas* – as impermanent, non-substantial, and suffering.
- In the cultivation of *jhanic* tranquility, the meditator develops five *jhana* factors while eliminating five hindrances. Applied thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicara*), happiness (*piti*), comfort (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of citta (*ekaggata*) constitute the positive mental factors acquired by the meditator with the attainment of the first *jhana* after destroying the five hindrances: sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*), perplexity (*vicikiccha*), ill-will (*vyapada*), flurry and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and sensuous desire (*kamacchanda*).
- Considering the mutual exclusive relation between the five *jhana* factors and the five hindrances, Ven. Dr. Henepola Gunaratana says that etymologically the term *jhana* has a twofold meaning, namely, “contemplation” and “burning up.” He says also that both of these meanings are appropriate because through the process of *jhana*, the meditator “reduces and eliminates the lower mental qualities such as the five hindrances and

promotes the growth of higher qualities such as the *jhana* factors.” (Henepola Gunaratana, *The Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, Kandy: BPS, 1988, p. 5)

- Developing *jhana* factors, the meditator eliminates the five hindrances temporarily and their complete removal occurs gradually with the path attainments or the attainment of permanent freedoms. For example, perplexity disappears with the attainment of stream-entry; sloth and torpor with the *arahantship*; and the rest of the factors with the stage of non-return. Thus in the super-mundane path, the five hindrances come within ten fetters (*samyojana*) because one acquires these path attainments after a gradual destruction of ten fetters.
- To develop *jhana* factors while cutting off the five hindrances, the meditator must have a good moral basis because the concentration – which is indispensable for the attainment of *jhanas* – does not arise in a constantly disturbed *citta*. To attain *jhanas* the meditator must get away from the five hindrances.
- AN I, 3-5 explain some conditions for the emergence and growth of the hindrances. Sensual desire arises and grows when one grasps the pleasant sense objects improperly; ill-will arises and grows when one grasps the unpleasant sense objects improperly; sloth and torpor arises and grows in the person whose *citta* is slow and sluggish; flurry and worry arises and grows in the person whose *citta* is not calm and placid; and finally, doubt arises and grows in the person who thinks improperly.
- The same *sutta* explains the factors that one should practice to combat the emergence and growth of the five hindrances. The factors mentioned are not the five *jhana* factors. This means that *jhana* factors are not something to be practiced but to be developed; *jhana* factors are experiential factors which appear as a result of one's practicing intense Serenity Meditation and acquiring higher concentration. This also means the existence of different meditation techniques for the Buddhist practitioner to begin with.
- Provided that a person properly grasps a pleasant sense object, sensual desire does not arise in him and even the arisen sensual desire disappears; if a person contemplates properly the *citta* through loving-kindness, ill-will does not arise in him, and even the arisen ill-will disappears; in the same way, if a person is energetic, sloth and torpor does not arise in him; if a person is calm, flurry and worry does not manifest in him; and if the person who thinks properly doubts disappear.

Four Form Jhanas

- And where is it that Mara and his followers cannot go? Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhana, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Māra, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Māra's eye of its opportunity.
- Again, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara ...
- Again, with the fading away as well as of rapture, a bhikkhu abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhana, on account of which the noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.' This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara...
- Again, with abandoning pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara...

Four Formless Jhanas

- Again, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of infinite space. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara...
- Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite,' a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of infinite consciousness. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara...

- Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing,' a bhikkhu enters and abides in the base of nothingness. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara...
- Again, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Mara's eye of its opportunity.

Nirodha-samapatti

- Again, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling. And his taints are destroyed by his seeing with wisdom. This bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Mara of its opportunity, and to have crossed beyond attachment to the world. (Nivapa Sutta, MN)

6. from sources

Neither Too Taut Nor Too Loose

I have heard that on one occasion the Exalted One was staying near Rajagaha, on Vulture Peak Mountain. And on that occasion Venerable Sona was staying near Rajagaha in the Cool Wood. Then, as Venerable Sona was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split and bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: "Of the Exalted One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from the impurities through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be possible to enjoy wealth and make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, and make merit?"

Then the Exalted One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Venerable Sona's awareness — as a strong man might stretch out his bent arm or bend his outstretched arm — disappeared from Vulture Peak Mountain, appeared in the Cool

Wood right in front of Venerable Sona, and sat down on a prepared seat. Venerable Sona, after bowing down to the Exalted One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Exalted One said to him, "Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn't this train of thought appear to your awareness: 'Of the Exalted One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from the impurities... What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, and make merit?'"

"Yes, Exalted One."

"Now what do you think, Sona. Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the vina?"

"Yes, Exalted One."

"And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too taut, was your vina in tune and playable?"

"No, Exalted One."

"And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too loose, was your vina in tune and playable?"

"No, Exalted One."

"And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned 1 to be right on pitch, was your vina in tune and playable?"

"Yes, Exalted One."

"In the same way, Sona, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there pick up your theme."

"Yes, Exalted One," Venerable Sona answered the Exalted One. Then, having given this exhortation to Venerable Sona, the Exalted One — as a strong man might stretch out his bent arm or bend his outstretched arm — disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Vulture Peak Mountain.

So after that, Venerable Sona determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, and resolute, he in no long time reached and remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing and realizing it for himself in the here and now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And thus Venerable Sona became another one of the arahants.

From Sonasutta, Anguttara Nikaya 6, 6, 1 (PTS 3, 374)

From Maha-cattarisaka Sutta: The Great Forty (Majjhimanikaya)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed the monks: "Monks!"

"Yes, lord," the monks replied.

The Blessed One said, "Monks, I will teach you noble right concentration with its supports and requisite conditions. Listen, and pay close attention. I will speak."

"Yes, lord," the monks replied.

The Blessed One said: "Now what, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness — is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong view as wrong view, and right view as right

view. This is one's right view. And what is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no priests or contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is wrong view.

"And what is right view? Right view, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right view with effluents [*asava*], siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right view, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right view that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? 'There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are priests & contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is the right view that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

"And what is the right view that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of discernment, analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, the path factor of right view of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is free from effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities — right view, right effort, & right mindfulness — run & circle around right view.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And what is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. This is wrong resolve.

"And what is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right resolve, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on

harmlessness. This is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right resolve that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, (mental) fixity, transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities — right view, right effort, & right mindfulness — run & circle around right resolve.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong speech as wrong speech, and right speech as right speech. And what is wrong speech? Lying, divisive tale-bearing, abusive speech, & idle chatter. This is wrong speech.

"And what is right speech? Right speech, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right speech with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right speech, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right speech that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from lying, from divisive tale-bearing, from abusive speech, & from idle chatter. This is the right speech that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

"And what is the right speech that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the four forms of verbal misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right speech that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong speech & to enter into right speech: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong speech & to enter & remain in right speech: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities — right view, right effort, & right mindfulness — run & circle around right speech.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong action as wrong action, and right action as right action. And what is wrong action? Killing, taking what is not given, illicit sex. This

is wrong action.

"And what is right action? Right action, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right action with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right action, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right action that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from killing, from taking what is not given, & from illicit sex. This is the right action that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

"And what is the right action that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the three forms of bodily misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right action that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong action & to enter into right action: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong action & to enter & remain in right action: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities — right view, right effort, & right mindfulness — run & circle around right action.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood, and right livelihood as right livelihood. And what is wrong livelihood? Scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, & pursuing gain with gain. This is wrong livelihood.

"And what is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right livelihood with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right livelihood, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right livelihood that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abandons wrong livelihood and maintains his life with right livelihood. This is the right livelihood that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

"And what is the right livelihood that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of wrong livelihood of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right livelihood

that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter into right livelihood: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter & remain in right livelihood: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities — right view, right effort, & right mindfulness — run & circle around right livelihood.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, right resolve comes into being. In one of right resolve, right speech comes into being. In one of right speech, right action... In one of right action, right livelihood... In one of right livelihood, right effort... In one of right effort, right mindfulness... In one of right mindfulness, right concentration... In one of right concentration, right knowledge... In one of right knowledge, right release comes into being. Thus the learner is endowed with eight factors, and the arahant with ten.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, wrong view is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong view as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right view as their condition go to the culmination of their development. In one of right resolve, wrong resolve is abolished... In one of right speech, wrong speech is abolished... In one of right action, wrong action is abolished... In one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is abolished... In one of right effort, wrong effort is abolished... In one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is abolished... In one of right concentration, wrong concentration is abolished... In one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is abolished... In one of right release, wrong release is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong release as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right release as their condition go to the culmination of their development.

"Thus, monks, there are twenty factors siding with skillfulness, and twenty with unskillfulness.

"This Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty has been set rolling and cannot be stopped by any contemplative or priest or deva or Mara and Brahma or anyone at all in the world.

"If any priest or contemplative might think that this Great Forty Dhamma discourse should be censured & rejected, there are ten legitimate implications of his statement that would form grounds for censuring him here & now. If he censures right view, then he would honor any priests and contemplatives who are of wrong view; he would praise them. If he censures right resolve... right

speech... right action... right livelihood... right effort... right mindfulness... right concentration... right knowledge... If he censures right release, then he would honor any priests and contemplatives who are of wrong release; he would praise them. If any priest or contemplative might think that this Great Forty Dhamma discourse should be censured & rejected, there are these ten legitimate implications of his statement that would form grounds for censuring him here & now.

"Even Vassa & Bhañña — those teachers from Okkala who were proponents of no-causality, no-action, & no-existence — would not think that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured & rejected. Why is that? For fear of criticism, opposition, & reproach."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.